

**Michigan Senate
Senate Insurance Committee
Hearing on SB 492**

October 11, 2017
2:00PM

Chairman Hune, Vice Chair Brandenburg, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today in support of Senate bill 492 on behalf of the Michigan Society of Hematology and Oncology (MSHO) and the American Society for Clinical Oncology (ASCO).

I am Dr. Phil Stella, an oncologist at Trinity Health in Ann Arbor Michigan and a past Chair of ASCO's Government Relations Committee and member of the MSHO. This is my second time in two years testifying before you in support of the cancer treatment fairness bill and I will continue to do so until oral chemotherapy parity is a reality in Michigan for my cancer patients.

Thanks to the tremendous strides made in cancer treatment over the last decade, oncologists like me now have options to treat cancer patients with oral and other self-administered anticancer medications that provide clinical advantages over traditional intravenous or injected cancer drugs. Oral cancer drugs play an increasingly important role in my day-to-day care of cancer patients. They are often the only or best treatment option for my patients. This will continue to be true as many of the new cancer treatments in the pipeline are oral.

Some health plan cost sharing requirements for oral drugs result in patients having very large out of pocket costs for cancer drugs. The cost-sharing burden imposed upon these patients can create insurmountable financial barriers for cancer patients who need access to oral cancer medications. It also can hinder oncologists' ability to prescribe the most effective treatments. We know that patient costs can impact adherence.

Michigan is one of only seven states that have not enacted laws to ensure that patient cost sharing for oral drugs be no less favorable than for traditional IV drugs.

SB 492, introduced by Senator Geoff Hansen, would address these barriers. This is not about convenience for cancer patients or medical oncologists; it is often about access to the most cutting-edge, effective treatment.

I urge the committee to pass SB 492. It is time for Michigan to join the majority of states in providing this protection to cancer patients. Thank you for your consideration.